Numb. 131

# The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

——*Scelus eſt jugulare Falernum,*
*Et dare Campano toxica ſæva Mero.* Mart.

From *Tueſday February* 7. to *Thurſday February* 9. 1709.

*Sheer-Lane, February* 8.

THERE is in this City a certain Fraternity of Chymical Operators, who work under Ground in Holes, Caverns, and dark Retirements, to conceal their Myſteries from the Eyes and Obſervation of Mankind. Theſe Subterraneous Philoſophers are daily employed in the Tranſmutation of Liquors, and, by the Power of Magical Drugs and Incantations, raiſing under the Streets of *London* the choiceſt Products of the Hills and Valleys of *France*. They can ſqueeze *Bourdeaux* out of the *Sloe*, and draw *Champagne* from an *Apple*. *Virgil* in that remarkable Prophecy

*Inculiſque rubens pendebit Sentibus Uva.*

"The ripening Grape ſhall hang on ev'ry Thorn.

Seems to have hinted at this Art, which can turn a Plantation of *Northern* Hedges into a Vineyard. Theſe Adepts are known among one another by the Name of Wine-Brewers, and I am afraid do great Injury, not only to her Majeſty's Cuſtoms, but to the Bodies of many of her good Subjects.

Having received ſundry Complaints againſt theſe inviſible Workmen, I ordered the proper Officer of my Court to ferret them out of their reſpective Caves, and bring them before me, which was Yeſterday executed accordingly.

The Perſon who appeared againſt them was a Merchant, who had by him a great Magazine of Wines that he had laid in before the War: But theſe Gentlemen (as he ſaid) had ſo vitiated the Nation's Palate, that no Man could believe his to be *French*, becauſe it did not taſt like what they ſold for ſuch. As a Man never pleads better than where his own Perſonal Intereſt is concern'd, he exhibited to the Court with great Eloquence, That this new Corporation of Druggiſts had inflamed the Bills of Mortality, and puzzled the College of Phyſicians with Diſeaſes, for which they neither knew a Name or Cure. He accuſed ſome of giving all their Cuſtomers Cholicks and Megrims; and mentioned one who had boaſted, he had a Tun of Claret by him, that in a Fortnights Time ſhould give the Gout to a Dozen of the healthfuleſt Men in the City, provided that their Conſtitutions were prepared for it by Wealth and Idleneſs. He then enlarged, with a great Show of Reaſon, upon the Prejudice which theſe Mixtures and Compoſitions had done to the Brains of the *Engliſh* Nation; as is too viſible (ſaid he) from many late Pamphlets, Speeches and Sermons, as well as from the ordinary Converſations of the Youth of this Age. He then quoted an ingenious Perſon, who would undertake to know by a Man's Writings, the Wine he moſt delighted in; and on that Occaſion named a certain Satyriſt, whom he had diſcovered to be the Author of a Lampoon, by a manifeſt Taſt of the Sloe, which ſhow'd it ſelf in it by much Roughneſs, and little Spirit.

In the laſt Place, he aſcribed to the unnatural Tumults and Fermentations which theſe Mixtures raiſe in our Blood; the Diviſions, Heats and Animoſities, that reign among us; and in particular, aſſerted moſt of the Modern Enthuſiaſms and Agitations to be nothing elſe but the Effects of adulterated *Port*.

The Council for the Brewers had a Face ſo extremely inflamed and illuminated with Carbuncles, that I did not wonder to ſee him an Advocate for theſe Sophiſtications. His Rhetorick was likewiſe ſuch as I ſhould have expected from the common Draught, which I found he often drank to a great Exceſs. Indeed, I was ſo ſurpriſed at his Figure and Parts, that I ordered him to give me a Taſt of his uſual Liquor, which I had no ſooner drank, but I found a Pimple riſing in my Forehead; and felt ſuch a ſenſible Decay in my Underſtanding, that I would not proceed in the Trial till the Fume of it was entirely diſſipated.

This notable Advocate had little to ſay in the Defence of his Clients, but that they were under a Neceſſity of making Claret if they would keep open their Doors, it being the Nature of Mankind to love every thing that is prohibited. He further pretended to reaſon, That it might be as profitable to the Nation to make *French* Wine as *French* Hats; and concluded with the great Advantage that this had already brought to Part of the Kingdom. Upon which he informed the Court, That the Lands in *Herefordſhire* were raiſed Two Years Purchaſe ſince the Beginning of the War.

When I had ſent out my Summons to theſe People, I gave at the ſame Time Orders to each of them to bring the ſeveral Ingredients he made uſe of in diſtinct Phials, which they had done accordingly, and ranged them into two Rows on each Side of the Court. The Workmen were drawn up in Ranks behind them. The Merchant informed me, That in one Row of Phials were the ſeveral Colours they dealt in, and in the other the Taſts. He then ſhowed me on the Right Hand one who went by the Name of *Tom. Tintoret*, who (as he told me) was the greateſt Maſter in his Colouring of any Vintner in *London*. To give me a Proof of his Art, he took a Glaſs of fair Water; and by the Infuſion of Three Drops out of one of his Phials, converted it into a moſt beautiful pale *Burgundy*. Two more of the ſame Kind heightened it into a perfect *Languedoc*: From thence it paſſed into a florid *Hermitage*: And after having gone through Two or Three other Changes, by the Addition of a ſingle Drop, ended in a very deep *Pontack*. This ingenious Virtuoſo ſeeing me very much ſurpriſed at his Art, told me, That he had not an Opportunity of ſhowing it in Perfection, having only made uſe of Water for the Ground-Work of his Colouring: But that if I were to ſee an Operation upon Liquors of ſtronger Bodies, the Art would appear to a much greater Advantage. He added, That he doubted not but it would pleaſe my Curioſity to ſee the Cyder of one Apple take only a Vermilion, when another, with a leſs Quantity of the ſame Infuſion, would riſe into a dark Purple,

ple, according to the different Texture of Parts in the Liquor. He informed me alſo, That he could hit the different Shades and Degrees of Red, as they appear in the Pink and the Roſe, the Clove and the Carnation, as he had *Rheniſh* or *Moſelle*, *Perry* or *White Port*, to work in.

I was ſo ſatisfied with the Ingenuity of this Virtuoſo, that, after having adviſed him to quit ſo diſhoneſt a Profeſſion, I promiſed him, in Conſideration of his great Genius, to recommend him as a Partner to a Friend of mine, who has heaped up great Riches, and is a Scarlet Dyer.

The Artiſts on my other Hand were ordered in the Second Place to make ſome Experiments of their Skill before me: Upon which the famous *Harry Sippet* ſtept out, and asked me, What I would be pleaſed to drink? At the ſame Time he filled out Three or Four white Liquors in a Glaſs, and told me, That it ſhould be what I pleaſed to call for; adding very learnedly, That the Liquor before him was as the naked Subſtance or Firſt Matter of his Compound, to which he and his Friend, who ſtood over againſt him, could give what Accidents or Form they pleaſed. Finding him ſo great a Philoſopher, I deſired he would convey into it the Qualities and Eſſence of right *Bourdeaux*. Coming, coming, Sir, (ſaid he) with the Air of a Drawer; and after having caſt his Eye on the ſeveral Taſts and Flavours that ſtood before him, he took up a little Cruit that was filled with a kind of Inky Juice, and powring ſome of it out into the Glaſs of White-Wine, preſented it to me, and told me, This was the Wine over which moſt of the Buſineſs of the laſt Term had been diſpatched. I muſt confeſs, I looked upon that ſooty Drug which he held up in his Cruit as the Quinteſſence of *Engliſh Bourdeaux*, and therefore deſired him to give me a Glaſs of it by it ſelf, which he did with great Unwillingneſs. My Cat at that Time ſat by me upon the Elbow of my Chair; and as I did not care for making the Experiment upon my ſelf, I reached it to her to ſip of it, which had like to have coſt her her Life; for notwithſtanding it flung her at firſt into freakiſh Tricks, quite contrary to her uſual Gravity; in leſs than a quarter of an Hour ſhe fell into Convulſions; and had it not been a Creature more tenacious of Life than any other, would certainly have died under the Operation.

I was ſo incenſed by the Tortures of my innocent Domeſtick, and the unworthy Dealings of theſe Men, that I told them, if each of them had as many Lives as the injured Creature before them, they deſerved to forfeit them for the pernicious Arts which they uſed for their Profit. I therefore bid them look upon themſelves as no better than as a kind of Aſſaſſins and Murderers within the Law. However, ſince they had dealt ſo clearly with me, and laid before me their whole Practice, I diſmiſſed them for that Time, with a particular Requeſt, That they would not poiſon any of my Friends and Acquaintance, and take to ſome honeſt Livelihood without Loſs of Time.

For my own Part, I have reſolved hereafter to be very careful in my Liquors, and have agreed with a Friend of mine in the Army, upon their next March, to ſecure me Two Hogſheads of the beſt Stomach-Wine in the Cellars of *Verſailles*, for the Good of my Lucubrations, and the Comfort of my old Age.

*For the Benefit of my Readers, I think my ſelf obliged here to let them know, that I always make Uſe of an old-faſhioned e, which very little differs from an o. This has been the Reaſon, that my Printer ſometimes miſtakes the one for the other; as in my laſt Paper, I find,* thoſe *for* theſe, beheld *for* behold, Corvix *for* Cervix, *and the like.*

*Advertiſements.*

*** PROPOSALS for Printing the LUCUBRATIONS of Iſaac Bickerſtaff Eſq; by Subſcriptions, in Two Volumes in Octavo, on a Large Character, and Fine Royal Paper, are to be ſeen, and Subſcriptions taken, at Charles Lillie's, a Perfumer, at the Corner of Beauford-Buildings in the Strand, and John Morphew's near Stationers-Hall.

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